

SA producers urged to jump on bean bandwagon

How Australian faba beans perform compared with their international competitors will be the focus of a major bean production and marketing conference in September.

Organised by Pulse Australia and supported by SAGIT, the conference will have an international trade focus.

Pulse Australia's Wayne Hawthorne said registrations were being taken now for Bean Focus 2004, to be held at the Barossa Valley Convention Centre, Tanunda, from September 21-23.

Among the pulse crops produced by South Australian farmers, faba beans ranked second only to field peas in area sown and tonnage produced.

Bean production has climbed in the past five years from about 100,000 tonnes in 1999 to 200,000t in 2003.

"Our international guest speaker for the conference will be Atef Tadros, the chairman of Tee Kay International Cairo. Australia has supplied Egypt with many of their faba beans in the past and Atef will provide an international perspective on where Australia fits in regards to world trade and who major competitors are.

"How the Australian faba bean market has performed compared to its competitors, and where Australia is positioned market-wise will be discussed from an international viewpoint.

"Growers and marketers alike are curious in regards to how the introduction of GMO's will impact on Australia's major markets and their quality demands. With insight from our international speaker Australia will see how this technology may impact world trade.

"Atef will speak on quality requirements for beans and end use products in the Middle East and how Australian beans fit into that market. Combined with information on the latest research nationally, growers and marketers alike will receive a clear indication of where the industry is heading.

"Breeders from across the country will hear what marketers and growers want regarding quality and agronomy. Future prospects for value adding and the general outlook of the bean industry will be on the agenda," he said.

Mr Hawthorne said Australia liked to be considered as a leader in world bean production techniques and knowing our markets and their quality requirements was important for our reputation as a quality supplier.

“We are hoping the contribution from the international guest will show that the bean market is not limited and there are many more opportunities if we produce quality produce,” he said.

Mr Hawthorne said the conference would include a field presentation, supported by SAGIT, where delegates could see the performance of present and upcoming varieties and production techniques.

For a registration brochure visit www.pulseaus.com.au or contact Wayne Hawthorne on pulse.wayne@bigpond.com or 0429 647 455.